

CITY of TORRANCE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Summer 2011



Volunteer Week: April 10 -16

*When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die.
~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

On April 12th, the Mayor and City Council issued a proclamation thanking the City's volunteers. While presenting the proclamation, the Mayor expressed awe over the amazing amount of service provided during 2010 with over 2,000 volunteers serving approximately 85,000 hours in support of their community.

The City Council also issued certificates of appreciation to several of the City's outstanding volunteers. Pictured left to right, front row: **Jeannine Madden**, Torrance Art Museum; **Teri Kuwahara**, Torrance Sister City Association; **March Taguchi**, Torrance Transit; **Monica Sevens**, Special Needs Recreation; **Anne Bromley**, James Armstrong Theatre; and on the far left, **Olivia Lopez**, Torrance Fire Department. Pictured left to right on the back row: **Joan Risse**, Library; **Barbara Hill**, Torrance Rose Float Association; **Bob Feldman**, Focal Point on Aging; **John Kemper**, Torrance Amateur Radio Association; **Jerry Herbers**, Farmers' Market; and **Terry Bass**, Senior Tax Assistance; and **Rachel Todd**, Youth Volunteer. Certificates were also presented to **Joe Dinicola** for his work at the Torrance Police Department and to **Gerald Cole** for his work at the Madrona Marsh, though they were unable to attend the event.

Each of these volunteers has a great story behind their service, and staff gave a presentation highlighting each volunteer's contribution. To view this presentation, paste the following in your web browser:

http://torrance.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=8&clip_id=9389, and jump to item 6B. Or you can read blog entries spotlighting each volunteer at <http://cityoftorrancevolunteerprogram.blogspot.com/>

The Volunteer program would like to thank all of our volunteers for their service. The City and the community benefit greatly by the time that you give to a wide variety of programs. If you are interested in finding out more information regarding how you can serve as a volunteer, please call 310-618-2827.



Volunteer Spotlights

Written by Jennifer Hagihara



Basketball Coaches

According to the Recreation Supervisor for the City of Torrance, a great coach is someone “who is not all about winning, but about teaching, sportsmanship and learning life lessons through sports.” And the two basketball volunteer coaches Patti Goldenson selected, Peter Saleman and Titus Washington, are “the epitome of that.”

Growing up, Washington played basketball and won championship games while attending Serra High School in Gardena. In this past season, Washington coached The Magruder Jazz from Magruder Middle School and tied for first place.

“My father coached me and I’ve always wanted to coach my kids,” Washington said after asked how he became interested in coaching. “I’ve been coach volunteering for nine years now and have coached all four of my kids in basketball.”

Just like Washington, Saleman loves basketball and frequently plays with his nephew on weekends. Knowing this, Saleman’s brother, Fred Saleman, asked him if he was interested in coaching alongside him for The Clippers, which represented Casmir Middle School’s 8th grade boys. Saleman, who never coached before, agreed.

“I enjoyed it a lot,” Saleman said. “It was a learning experience and now that I’ve done it, I wouldn’t do anything different. I was amazed at the group of boys I worked with.”

Saleman wouldn’t mind coaching again and encourages more people to volunteer. “Even though I think a lot of parents are nervous because they’ve never done it before,” he said, “It’s not as bad as it seems. You are making time for the kids.”

Aside from just having fun, to both of these coaches, the most important lessons they could teach their group of kids is to be good sportsmen, good individuals and to do well in school.

Without volunteer coaches, the City couldn’t have the quantity of sports programs it has today. Although there are a lot of volunteers, Goldenson says that there is always a need for more.

“If an individual has the time, give up that time to the kids because it’s very important,” Washington said. “That’s the most important thing about being a volunteer. If you have the time, give it up.”



*Titus Washington, back row, center with his son, and his assistant coach **Bob Richardson**.*



*Coach **Peter Saleman**, far right, and his brother **Fred Saleman** is on the far left.*

Do you have the time to be a volunteer coach? Each year, approximately 1,800 kids in grades K-8 play at local schools throughout Torrance. With this many kids, the Community Services Department needs to recruit 200 coaches for each season. Although the season doesn’t start until January, the program starts taking coaching applications after August 15th. You can access an online application at <https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?AP=671916624>, or apply in person at 3231 Torrance Boulevard. All coaches will be fingerprinted and subject to a background check, and are expected to conduct a weekly practice for an 8 game season.

For more information, see the City’s youth Basketball page at <http://www.torranceca.gov/parks/9626.htm>, or call Patti Goldenson at 310-781-7515.



Rose Garden

Across the street from quaint little houses, next to the Torrance Courthouse and near the corner of Maple Avenue and Torrance Boulevard sits a garden of 100 beautiful rose bushes.

"It's beautiful," Judy Robelotto, said as she looked at the blooming bushes. "This garden is organic; there are no pesticides and it's been here forever."

Robelotto is part of the Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) which educates citizens on disaster preparedness. One day she received an email from the City asking for someone to volunteer as coordinator for the garden. Maria Cesca, who began volunteering in 1999 wanted to retire. After a brief interview, Robelotto got the job and started in February of this year.

Cesca began volunteering when she heard that park services wanted to grass the area over because of cutbacks and the labor involved in caring for the buds. Before the City Manager reacted, someone suggested that volunteers should take control of it.

"When I sent an email to all the employees," Cesca said. "There was such a huge response that the City Employee Adopt a Rose Program started. Back then there were 30 bushes."

Robelotto makes sure that other volunteers are informed of get-together's for pruning the bushes and to guide them and make sure that they are taking care of the roses properly. Proper care of the buds vary by the season and on the weather.

"In the summer they have to be watered once a week or so," John Wisz, a volunteer who has been tending to the plants for the past seven years, said. "We prune them once a year around Martin Luther King's day. It's a big effort. Everyone tries to make it on that particular day."

The City is very supportive to the volunteers needs, providing them with fertilizer, potting soil, and a garden hose. But because of the high demand of care the roses require, more help is needed, especially in the month of January.

"We don't have many people," Robelotto said. "So if someone would like to volunteer, we have the roses."

There are over 100 roses in the garden with about 50 to 60 different varieties. Those varieties include Sterling Silver, Double Delight, Sutter's Gold, Fragrant Cloud and Mister Lincoln, just to name a select few. Robelotto and the other volunteers have a love for gardening and hope to continue beautifying the garden and the City for as long as possible.

"It's nice for citizens to know the roses are here," Robelotto said. "I take a class with a lady who sits on the bench and enjoys the garden and tells me that it's just so peaceful and nice-smelling."

If you enjoy gardening, particularly rose gardening—why not volunteer at the Rose Garden? For more information regarding volunteering in the Rose Garden, contact Laura Lohnes, Volunteer Coordinator for the City of Torrance. She can be reached at 310-618-2967 or at LLohnes@TorranceCA.gov.



left to right, Judy Robelotto, John Wisz and his wife, Helen



About Your City

Budget Workshops:

Public Budget Workshops were held on June 7th and June 21st to provide a forum for public input in the proposed budget and revisions. For the upcoming fiscal year, the City Manager recommended the deletion of 21.4 vacant positions, which would accomplish a budget savings of \$2.7 million.

Staff also presented alternative scenarios for the City Council's consideration. These scenarios included:

- Eliminating the after-school program at the Attic and using the facility to generate rental income.
- Consolidating the staff at the Walteria and El Retiro Libraries so that the same staff would rotate between the two branches.
- Transitioning paid crossing guards to volunteer crossing guards. This transition would be accomplished over a period of time and would retain paid staff at intersections with the heaviest traffic.

Ultimately, the City Council chose to achieve most of their budget savings through the deletion of vacant positions.

To see the proposed FY 2011-13 budget, go to

http://www.torranceca.gov/Documents/PROPOSED_2011-13_BUDGET_BOOK.pdf

Torrance Permit Center Opens!

On May 2nd, the Mayor and City Council cut the ribbon for the long awaited opening of the Torrance Permit Center. Located at the far eastern entrance of City Hall, the new center allows patrons to obtain building permits, plan check services, and business licenses. In addition, customers can pay for their water bills and traffic tickets and can register for oversize vehicle permits.

State of the City:

The Torrance Chamber of Commerce hosted the Mayor's annual State of the City Address on May 12th at the Torrance Double Tree Hotel. Attendees of the event were treated to an introductory video showcasing the City's storied past achievements which also highlighted continuing efforts to revitalize the local economy. Citi-Cable Channel 3 (Time Warner) and Channel 36 (Verizon) will be broadcasting the Mayor's speech accompanied by the video during the summer from June 22nd to July 25th at 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. or, use the link below to read a transcript of the Mayor's speech.

http://www.torranceca.gov/PDF/2011_State_of_the_City.pdf

Centennial Celebration Update

The City's Centennial Committee launched their new website www.torrancecentennial.org. The website contains information on planned festivities, the City's history, and will eventually contain a store that will sell promotional items to help offset the cost of the celebrations. The Centennial Committee is also seeking volunteers to assist in events. You can submit a volunteer interest application at the Centennial website using the link:

<http://www.torrancecentennial.org/volunteer>

All America City Finalist

As a start to the Centennial celebration, the City of Torrance submitted their application to become an "All America City". This distinction is awarded by the National Civic League who recognizes ten cities each year. Cities submit an application that focuses on their innovative solutions to community problems. Torrance was among the 27 finalists for the award and during the week of June 14th, a delegation traveled to Kansas City, Missouri, to participate in the final judging. This delegation included representatives from the Pediatric Therapy Network, local businesses such as American Honda and Toyota as well as City officials and volunteers. While Torrance did not win the award, the experience gained during the week-long celebration of civic engagement will continue to inspire city and community leaders for years to come. Torrance won the award in 1956.

A special volunteer is needed.....

The Torrance Public Library is looking for a special volunteer to coordinate the Words on Wheels (WOW) program. WOW volunteers select and deliver library materials for their clients who cannot get to the Library. The WOW volunteer coordinator will manage the logistics of the program, matching volunteers and clients, arranging for renewal of materials, and participating in the selection and training process for prospective WOW volunteers. This volunteer must be over the age of 18, have excellent communications skills, and should be able to work at least 2 hours a week at the Katy Geissert Library. For more information, contact Laura Lohnes at (310) 618-2967, or Hillary Theyer at (310) 618-5950.

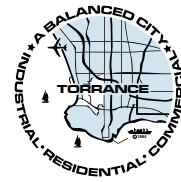


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